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**NONCOMPROMISING FIGHT BY
A.F. of L. FOR ESTABLISHMENT
OF THIRTY-HOUR WORK WEEK**

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The Labor News

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OCTOBER, 1934

Idle People Must Help Themselves

Government's Plan for Manufacturing Wearing Apparel for the Nation's Poor and Needy Wholly Justifiable.

Some leather manufacturers are expressing great concern lest the government use any of its millions of cattle hides to make boots and shoes for the idle poor who have no footwears and also have not the money to buy with. The shoe manufacturers, especially, profess to see a great menace to their industry, notwithstanding the fact that they have been getting fat government contracts for Army and Navy shoes for years and years past. All they want is the whole hog and something over.

To these men, it seems better for the government to tax people to furnish money to do things which the otherwise idle people can do for themselves. Even the pledge and promise that such community work would not be allowed to go on the outside market, but would be used for the community poor, did not satisfy them. "Give us all the business," is their cry.

It seems to be overlooked that the idle people are being supported by those who are working, and that those who are working are becoming more and more crushed and weary with the ever-increasing burden. Finally, there is such a thing as the end of credit. When that time comes, the end will be in sight.

There is no way out of the depression except by permitting the idle people to help themselves. It is estimated that there are between 12,000,000 and 15,000,000 people out of employment. No government can support such a load indefinitely. Our government funds, in hand or potential, are limited. Our resources are unlimited. Why ruin the national credit by disregarding the plain economic facts?

There is no desire on the part of the government to go into the business of making shoes and other wearing apparel, and by this means come in competition with private industry. The present plan is for the purpose of meeting an extraordinary emergency, and if manufacturers of shoes and other products were fair, and permitted their greed to take a short vacation, they would not object as strenuously as they do to the government's plan to aid the poor and needy.

The New Deal has done a lot toward helping these manufacturers, who, for the most part, were in pretty bad shape last year. The hundreds of millions they had lost as the result of the depression, was more than made up during the past year and this, it would seem, should prompt them to cooperate with the Administration in its efforts to provide for the millions of unemployed.

It is the government's duty to make provision for the care of the unemployed. The unemployment problem has caused an emergency to exist, and until private industry has been able to absorb these unemployed millions, it is perfectly sound and proper for the government to take such means as will warrant temporary relief.

The CCC and Its Great Work

Under Supervision of Robert Fechner, 300,000 Young Men Are Not Only Doing Work That Will Pay Their Own Expenses But Are Being Fitted Into Active and Worth-While Citizens.

Nothing but praise, generally, is heard of the aims, objects and general accomplishments of the Civilian Conservation Corps, which under the general organization of Robert Fechner, former vice-president of the International Association of Machinists, has added a chapter of real national progress to the history of the New Deal.

Hundreds of thousands of young men, rendered hopeless and almost desperate by continued idleness and want, have been turned into active and worth-while citizens in their newly found occupation. This provides them with the essentials of life—food, clothing and shelter.

The nominal sum which they receive for their work, \$30 a month, is but a symbol of the appreciation of the Government, and is not intended, nor

even represented, to imply any basic wage scale. That the most of this money goes to the families of these young men, giving the latter a boon in place of the burden of the formerly unemployed member of the household, is a particularly helpful feature of the whole CCC plan.

Work of the young men includes forest fire prevention, building of trails, roads, dams and other projects. Extermination of plant and forest pests would alone justify the employment of the corps.

The work which is now being done will repay itself in rich dividends for the present, and more especially for future generations. Compared with many purely needless and non-liquidating projects which have been entered upon as an obvious by-pass to benevolence, the work of the CCC stands in a class by itself.

And for this happy result, Robert Fechner, the able and efficient labor organizer and administrator, is receiving a just measure of praise. We need more like him in the general scope of the NRA.

Law's Delay Contrary to Constitutional Guarantees

Keeping Victims in Jail for Months Awaiting Trial is Hindrance to Solution of Crime Situation.

It may be surprising to some folks to know that insofar as the dispensation of justice is concerned, we are several thousands of years behind the most primitive tribes of present or ancient times. What the spinal column is to the human body, so is the element of reasonable speed in the administration of the law. Savage and barbarous tribes may not have the best laws in the world, but they represent the will and judgment of the majority. Moreover, savages would not tolerate of indefinite delay in the execution of the decrees of the court, which is the chief, when the evidence had been fully presented.

But, today, we read that the need of a judge of the Federal Court, First District, Boston, is such that 200 criminal cases—some of them of long duration—are awaiting trial. Meantime, prisoners have been held in jail for months and months, having been unable to raise bail, and their cases not having been called to trial.

That this is a dishonorable and outrageous situation in a Commonwealth like Massachusetts would not saying. Why do we bother to hold national conferences on the crime situation when we do not even furnish the judicial machinery for handling cases brought before the court?

Another ridiculous phase of this congested docket is that judges are being loaned, from court to court, for the purpose of some special emergency case. All the above is plainly contrary to our Constitutional guarantee of speedy justice. It is convicting at crime on the part of those in high places.

Manufacturers and the Cost of Living

Most Important is Payment of Dividends, With Little Thought to Decent Living Standards and Comfort of Employees.

A passenger on a ship which was in danger of foundering in mid-ocean, in the good old days, was called to the pump, along with the crew. He dissented because, as he said: "I have paid my passage, and that ends my concern!"

"Pump, or hang," said the captain. He pumped!

So, in our economic system there be some manufacturers who can see nothing but profits. Just how industry can be maintained with an army of idle and suffering people does not appeal to their mechanical processes. They think, like the independent passenger, that their concern ended with their investment! It does not; it never will!

One would imagine that manufacturers, to whom the successful and continuous operation of their plants should be a first consideration, would have a keen and sensitive regard for everything that affected the cost of living of their employees? It does not. They do not seem to consider that the aim and object of working is—to get the means to live by, and that the higher the cost of living, the more wages must be paid out to balance the added cost!

Some local manufacturers have sat still and allowed the trolleys, an invaluable adjunct to their plants, to almost die of lack of patronage. They should have been the first ones to see, that their workers were supplied with cheap and extensive transportation. They should also concern themselves with the cost of food and housing. On such things depend the harmony or disharmony of industrial relations. But, they prefer to close their eyes and their ears to the signs and portents of the times.

They will finally awake from their sad self delusion when the harm has been done. It is such blind indifference and half-way thinking that is at the bottom of most of our industrial unrest.

Providence is no exception.

It is time for public men, who have the time and the courage, to speak out boldly on such public questions. The Dark Ages manufacturers are their own worst enemies because they do not take into consideration that men must live, not merely work, work, or, be prematurely dumbed and cast upon the social scrap heap to be a burden upon the community.

"Evil is brought by want of thought," but the blind industrialist needs it not!

Gen. Johnson on the Way Out

Had Men Labeled as Administrators of Recovery Act, But Spelled It All With "Accused" "Tom" McMahon of "Double-Crossing."

Of all the epithets and wise-cracks used by General Hugh S. Johnson while administering the National Recovery Act, and which were sarcastically referred to by those who opposed the New Deal, none had as much effect in decreasing his popularity as did his accusation against President Thomas F. McMahon of the United Textile Workers, to the effect that he was a "double-crosser."

The general's wise cracks were resented by his opponents, who took occasion to make him appear as a "low-down" in the estimation of conservative people. To wage warfare, and all enthusiasm over the success of the New Deal, his statements lent emphasis to his actions, and were regarded as coming from a man who was sincere, and who meant what he said.

But, when the general turned-turtle and accused President McMahon of being a "double-crosser," and failed to offer any evidence to prove his statement, he lost millions of friends, who now greatly question not only his sincerity but his veracity as well.

Coming at a time when workers and sympathizers throughout the nation were yearning for a settlement of the general textile strike, accusations or any kind of criticism from one whose position was demanded mediation rather than criticism, was considered as extremely bad judgment, and gave cause for questioning the General's honesty of purpose.

It is most regrettable that after having performed such valuable service for more than a year, during which he had solicited the support and friendship of the organized Labor movement, he chose to bring about himself the enmity of Labor.

Occurring at this time, on the eve of his retirement, makes the incident all the more regrettable, as it gives working people reason to believe that which they had been told regarding his desire to have corded established favorable to industry, without regard for the interests of those who produce. Notwithstanding this, the great majority of workers had implicit faith in Gen. Johnson. Millions who had no jobs prior to his administration of the NRA, and were made self-supporting later, were slow to question his honesty and sincerity, and had kept his mouth closed, and permitted the strike to be settled without interference, he would have gone down in history as one of the country's greatest and most capable men.

What "Stretch-out" is to the Textile Industry

Machine is Reported That One Man Today Is Required to Produce as Much as 443 Men Were 100 Years Ago.

The "stretch-out" system as practiced today in the textile industry is a challenge to the economic thought and business structure of the country. This is a term used to indicate the increased machine load per worker, and raises the question of whether the individual is to be displaced by the machine monster or ground down to the level of the common laborer.

In no other field in recent years has machinery made such inroads upon hand labor and upon the employment of human beings as in the textile industry. It reaches its climax in the Southern States where the workers, ground down to abject poverty by low wages and with inventive genius resisted by every resource of the inventing genius to their displacement by the machine.

A little over 100 years ago, when cotton manufacture first began in this country, each loom in use required the attention of not less than three skilled and expert weavers. But as improvements were made in loom machinery, the proportion of looms to workers gradually increased to a point where, 20 years ago, the number of looms to the single worker had been raised to 20. Today, in some of the big cotton mills of the nation, especially those producing gauze and cheesecloth, the single weaver is caring for 148 looms.

This is an increase of 444 in the ratio of machinery to human workers. In other words, 443 more than 100 years ago are today displaced by the machine.

It should be borne in mind, however, that whether the individual worker is attending 60 or 148 looms, the work load has been stretched to the limit of his physical endurance, and that mill managers are making constant studies of ways and means by which the work load may be increased, or, in other words, the human being further displaced by the machine.

Textile workers are protesting this condition because they have seen the machine output enormously increased without any corresponding increase in pay and by a constant reduction in their ranks of employed. The facts are that machines have been so perfected and made so automatic that they constantly need less skilled attendants, with the rates of pay far below what they were before the machine loads and work loads were so multiplied.

In the Southern States, the "stretch-out" system is being used at its maximum, with weavers and other highly skilled workers virtually reduced to the status of common labor and drawing common labor rates of pay. And in addition to this,

these mills have been the most obstinate in yielding to any system of collective bargaining, or making any concessions whatever in recognition of the human or legal rights of their employees.

No matter what attitude the individual citizen may take toward the general strike of the textile workers, he must give recognition to the fact that the skilled textile worker has a real and fundamental grievance against the machine monster, which is slowly trampling him down, and that this is an individual problem of his own. Likewise a national problem that challenges the attention of the economic thought and business policy of this day.

The Peace Outlook in Textiles

Personnel of President's Board Assures Square Deal for All Employed in Industry

President Roosevelt's appointment of the Steel Labor Relations Board to double as the Textile Labor Relations Board is regarded in the Textile industry as a masterpiece. This board, composed of Judge Walter P. Stacy of the Supreme Court of North Carolina; James A. Mullenback, of Chicago, and Henry A. Wiley, retired Admiral of the U. S. Navy, has experience, character and prestige.

Judge Stacy's position speaks for itself. He has served on five railroad arbitration boards. Admiral Wiley has also served on railroad arbitration boards, and they keep coming back to him for further services. Mullenback got his start in labor relations by acting as peacemaker for the clothing workers of Chicago—no job for a timid man.

Together, as the Steel Board, they held an election in the steel mills at Huntington, West Virginia. The regular union had a majority of all votes cast, and the board, brushing aside the contention of the steel companies, that majorities do not count against a company union, certified that this corporation would have to deal with the Amalgamated Association of Iron, Steel and Tin Workers.

The board has a very difficult job on hand in the textile difficulty. It used to be said that great numbers of people on both sides who lived after the Civil War never learned for thirty years after the aforesaid war was over. A similar state of what might be called "suspended information" seems to afflict a large number of textile mill bosses, particularly in the South.

They are refusing to put union workers back to work. In several communities, these workers are being evicted from their company-owned houses. One father writes from a textile town that his two sons have been discharged for the crime of going out with their fellows; and that one of them, whose wife is expecting an addition to the family, in a few weeks, nevertheless has been thrown out of the house they occupied.

No good ever was done or ever will be by such tactics. They are merely instances of half-baked "frightfulness" which angers much more than it frightens. To be fair, only a minority of the mill owners have resorted to this stupid bullying; and it is believed that they will yield to the insistence of the new board.

The Reason for Strikes as Seen by Mr. Woll

A. F. of L. Vice-President Says Few People Would Have Known Regarding Plight of Textile Workers Had It Not Been for the Recent Strike.

In a recent radio talk, Matthew Woll, vice-president of the American Federation of Labor, spoke of the strike as "the weapon of last resort," and defended it on the ground that it is used effectively where all other means have proven of no avail. Mr. Woll said:

"The strike in many instances is a weapon of public protest. In this instance it is largely an instrument for calling public attention to a condition of injustice which labor finds it impossible to adjust in any other manner.

"A month ago, very few people in this country thought very much about the plight of the textile workers; today, as a result of the recent general strike, it is a matter of dominant public interest. It is a piece of labor strategy which dramatizes a situation in a way which can be done in no other way.

"It is a perfectly constitutional right for man not only to work but also to withhold his labor. Unless men are serfs or slaves this right of free choice is one which is a constitutional part of the guarantee of every American citizen.

"To say, however, that it is legal; to say that it is at times necessary, is not to say that it is always the most efficient way of handling an industrial controversy.

"It must be abundantly clear that the strike weapon is a counsel of last resort. It should never be used by labor as a first weapon.

Conciliation, conference, cooperation, should all be forerunners of any drastic strike action.

"After all, the strike is like the surgeon's knife—it represents the extreme necessity and is not a matter for continuing use."

A BAD SMELLING BUSINESS

And now the American people learn from the Senate that American munitions makers are willing to sell gas bombs and machine guns to be used against their own countrymen who are striking against over-work and under-pay. All the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten a hand engaged in that business.

Sinclair's Philosophy Sounds Good

EPIC Plan Declared Great Human Appeal and California People Take Seriously in Campaign for Governorship.

When Upton Sinclair announced that he was leaving California, while he was captured the Democratic nomination for Governor, to run President Roosevelt, the dispatching from Hyde Park announced that "politics would be banished" in the discussion. Sinclair planned to stay with the President one hour, but at that point of the hour he stayed double that time. And nothing was "banished."

Next day he was in Washington at the luncheon table of the National Press Club. In the afternoon banquet hall every seat was occupied and the paper cynicism was the opening act of most of the rest of the press and their guests. Before Sinclair had finished his talk and the answering of questions, the great newspaper throng had accepted his plan rather seriously. The writer of this publication, who had been a positive expectation of one of the guests, "that Sinclair would be defeated," said: "I happened to have read all about the Hyde Park conference, and my friend told me that Sinclair had been a member of one of the old political parties. But that was all I had heard, and I thought he was now saving up his bit, and I hope he is now saving up to pay."

The point is that the so-called EPIC plan has a great human appeal, and it is interesting to note that the president and the most skeptical newspaper group in the world have concluded that there is plenty to think about, most seriously, in the experiments that Upton Sinclair proposes to the people of California.

LABOR QUERIES

Questions and Answers on Labor What It Has Done, Where It Stands on Problems of the Nation, and What It Proposes to Do. Who's Who in the Ranks of the Organized Workers, etc., etc.

Q.—What is the first big strike of textile workers in the South?
A.—A strike of 7,000 cotton mill workers in Augusta, Ga., in 1912.

Q.—What is a small definition of a strike?
A.—An organized association of workers who refuse to work in protest of their common interests.

Q.—When did the American Federation of Labor first make a declaration on the immigration question?
A.—In 1913. It was the convention for that year said: "There can be no question but that the immigration is a serious working a great injury to the people of our country."

Q.—What is the membership of the American Federation of Labor?
A.—The paid up membership in August, 1933, was 1,253,750. A. F. of L. headquarters estimate that at the beginning of September, 1934, the total organized strength of the labor movement was 1,600,000. This includes those unable to pay dues because of unemployment.

Q.—Who said, "The problem of the laborer is not to protect himself, but to work against those who desire to exploit and to give them constantly better opportunities for life and work."
A.—Samuel Gompers.

Q.—How many States will look old age security laws?
A.—Twenty.

Q.—How many local unions are there in the United States?
A.—There are 105 national and international unions.

Q.—What does labor hold to be the basic principle of relief for the unemployed?
A.—The A. F. of L. Executive Council says in its report to the San Francisco convention: "Work is the keynote of any relief program. A well-planned program of public works and national conscription is the most direct way to start up the depressed home or durable goods industries."

Q.—Does labor believe that the Reclamation Act should be extended to cover farm workers?
A.—The A. F. of L. Executive Council said in its report to the San Francisco convention: "The entire agricultural labor organization has so far been left without protection in regard to wages, hours, organization, or in dealing with employers. Some extension of the National Labor Relations Act to the field of agricultural labor should be made. It is a long and arduous task of the act now in existence, or supplementary act pertaining to agricultural labor."

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